CHAPTER XXIII.

HISTORY OF THE GRAND LODGE OF SCOTLAND.

IT has been already shown that in 1727, or within a decade of the formation of the Grand Lodge of England, the permeation of southern ideas was very thorough in the northern capital.[1] Thence, by radiation, the English novelties became everywhere engrafted on the Masonry of Scotland.[2]

The innovations are known to have taken firm root in Edinburgh as early as 1729, and their general diffusion throughout the Scottish kingdom was a natural consequence of the event, which it will next become my task to relate, viz., the erection of the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

From causes which can hardly be realized with the distinctness that might seem desirable, the circumstances immediately preceding the formation of governing bodies in the two territorial divisions of Great Britain were wholly dissimilar. In the South, and apart from York, we only hear of four Lodges, either as connected with the movement of 1717, or as being in existence at the time. Whereas, in the North, at the Grand Election of 1736, fully one hundred Lodges were in actual being, of which no less than thirty-three were represented on the occasion. As previously suggested, these early Scottish Lodges appear to have existed for certain trade—or operative—purposes, of which the necessity may have passed away, or at least has been unrecorded in the South.[3] It is possible that the course of legislation reviewed in Chapter VII., and ending with the Statute of Apprentices[4]—5 Eliz., c. iv.—enacted before the Union of the kingdoms, may have contributed to this divergency by modifying the relations between the several classes in the (operative) Lodge.

The proceedings of the English legislature were, of course, of limited application; and whilst therefore we may concede the possibility of the bonds being in some degree loosened which in the South connected the brethren of the Lodge, no similar result could have followed in the North. Indeed, long prior to the Union, at a convocation of master-tradesmen held at Falkland—October 26, 1636—under the presidency of Sir Anthony Alexander, General Warden and Master of Work to Charles I., the establishment of "Companies" of not less than twenty persons—which must often have been identical with, and never very unlike, *Lodges*[5]—in those parts of Scotland where no similar trade society already existed, was recommended as a means of putting an end to certain grievances, of which the members present at the meeting complained. The regulations passed

[1] *Ante*, p. 89.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 66.
[3] *Ante*, pp. 10, 59.
[4] Chap. VII., p. 376 *et seq.* See also p. 373.
[5] *Cf.* Chap. XV., pp. 336, 337.

on this occasion were "accepted" by the Lodge of Atcheson's Haven, January 4, 1637.[1] Even in later years, though at a period still anterior to the formation of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, the principle of association or combination met with much favor in that kingdom. Two or three years after 1717—if we follow Lecky[2] as our guide—clubs in Scotland began to multiply.

The abuses in the "airtis and craftis" of the Scottish building trades, which the formation of "Companies" was designed to repress,[3] had their counterparts in the "intolerable hardships" so feelingly complained of by the London Apprentices in 1641.[4] The latter—whose grievances were not abated, on becoming free of their trade—formed in many cases journeymen societies, which I think must have flourished to a far greater extent than has been commonly supposed.[5] In the Scottish "Companies," therefore, we meet with an organization closely analogous to that of the English craft guild, as it existed prior to the uprooting of these institutions by the summary legislation under the Tudor Sovereigns.[6] The journeymen fraternities in this country were doubtless established on a very different basis, but I am disposed to believe that their influence, could we succeed in tracing it, would be found to have left its mark on the character of our English Freemasonry. The "Companies" however, may reasonably be supposed to have done more than merely affix a tinge or coloring to the Masonry of Scotland; and it is highly probable that the principle they embodied—that of combination or association was a very potent factor in the preservation of the machinery of the *Lodge* for the purposes of the building trades.

In proceeding with the history of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, the remark may be expressed, that if any surprise is permissible at the establishment of that body in 1736, it can only legitimately arise from the circumstance that the Masons of Edinburgh allowed the brethren in York, Munster, and Dublin to precede them in following the example set at London in 1717. If any one influence more than another conduced to the eventual erection of a governing Masonic body for Scotland, it will be found, I think, in the fact that within the comparatively short space of thirteen years six prominent noblemen, all of whom were connected with the northern kingdom, had filled the chair of the Grand Lodge of England. One of these, the Earl of Crawford, would probably have been elected the first Grand Master of Scotland, but declined the honor, as he was leaving for England, and "was sensible that nothing could be a greater loss to the first Grand Lodge than the absence of the G. M. . . ."[7] The Earl of Home, Master of the Lodge of Kilwinning, at the Scots Arms, Edinburgh, appears after this to have stepped into the place of Lord Crawford as the candidate whose election would have been most acceptable to the Lodges, though in the result, as we shall presently see, and at the conclusion of a pre-arranged drama, William St. Clair, of Roslin, was chosen as Grand Master.

Although the preliminaries of the Grand Election were represented to have been taken by "the *four* Lodges in and about Edinburgh," there were at that time *six* Lodges in the metropolitan district, two of which, Canongate and Leith (*or* Leith and Canongate) and the Journeymen, were ignored in these proceedings. The other Lodges thus acting in

[1] Lyon, Hist. of L. of Edinburgh, p. 87.
[2] Chap. VIII., p. 66.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 370 *et seq.*
[4] A. Ross, Freemasonry in Inverness, 1877, p. 2.
[5] Vol. II., p. 88.
[6] Chap. VII., p. 371, 372.
[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 331, 336.

concert were those of Mary's Chapel, Canongate Kilwinning, Kilwinning Scots Arms,[1] and Leith Kilwinning—a recent offshoot from Canongate Kilwinning. The entire evidence, however, as marshalled by Lyon, makes it tolerably clear that in the agitation for a Scottish Grand Lodge the initiative was taken by Canongate Kilwinning. On September 29, 1735, as appears from the minutes of that body, the duty of "framing proposals to be laid before the several Lodges in order to the choosing of a Grand Master for Scotland," was remitted to a committee, whilst there is no recorded meeting of the four (subsequently) associated Lodges, at which the same subject was considered, until October 15, 1736, when delegates from the Lodges in question—Mary's Chapel, Canongate Kilwinning, Kilwinning Scots Arms, and Leith Kilwinning—met, and agreed upon a form of circular to be sent to all the Scottish Lodges, inviting their attendance either in person or by proxy for the purpose of electing a Grand Master.

It was eventually decided that the election should take place in Mary's Chapel on Tuesday, November 30, 1736, at half-past two in the afternoon; and at the appointed time thirty-three of the hundred or more Lodges that had been invited were found to be represented, each by a Master and two Wardens. These were[2]:—

Mary's Chappell.	Selkirg.	Biggar.
Kilwining.	Innverness.	Sanquhar.
Canongate Killwining.	Lessmahaggow.	Peebles.
Killwining Scots Arms.	Saint Brides at Douglass.	Glasgow St Mungo's.
Killwining Leith.	Lanark.	Greenock.
Killwining Glasgow.	Strathaven.	Fallkirk.
Coupar of Fyfe.	Hamilton.	Aberdeen.
Linlithgow.	Dunse.	Mariaburgh.[3]
Dumfermling.	Kirkcaldie.	Canongate and Leith.
Dundee.	Journeymen Masons of	*et e contra.*
Dalkeith.	Edinburgh.	Monross.
Aitcheson's Haven.	Kirkintilloch.	

To obviate jealousies in the matter of precedency, each Lodge was placed on the roll in the order in which it entered the hall.

No amendments were offered to the form of procedure, or to the draft of the Constitutions, which had been submitted to the Lodges, and the roll having been finally adjusted, the following resignation of the office of hereditary Grand Master was tendered by the Laird of Roslin, and read to the meeting:—

"I, William St. Clair of Rossline, Esquire, taking into my consideration that the Massons in Scotland did, by several deeds, constitute and appoint William and Sir William St. Clairs of Rossline, my ancestors, and their heirs, to be their patrons, protectors, judges, or masters; and that my holding or claiming any such jurisdiction, right, or privilege, might be prejudiciall to the Craft and vocation of Massonrie, whereof I am a member, and I, being desireous to advance and promote the good and utility of the said Craft of

[1] Formed February 14, 1729. Its original members were all Theoretical Masons. The Earls of Crawfurd, Kilmarnock, Cromarty, and Home; Lords Garlies, Erskine, and Colville; Sir Alexander Hope, and Captain John Young—D.G.M. 1736–52—were members, November 30, 1736; at which date the name of only one practical [*i. e.*, operative] Mason appears on the roll (Lyon, p. 175; *cf. ante*, Chap. XVI., p. 64).

[2] Lyon, p. 172. [3] Omitted in the Constitutions (1836, 1848, 1852), and by Lawrie (1804).

Masonrie to the utmost of my power, doe therefore hereby, for me and my heirs renounce, quit, claim, overgive, and discharge, all right, claim, or pretence that I, or my heirs, had, have, or any ways may have, pretend to, or claim, to be patron, protector, judge or master of the Massons in Scotland, in virtue of any deed or deeds made and granted by the said Massons, or of any grant or charter made by any of the Kings of Scotland, to and in favours of the said William and Sir William St. Clairs of Rosslin, or any others of my predecessors, or any other manner of way whatsomever, for now and ever: And I bind and oblige me, and my heirs, to warrand this present renounciation and discharge at all hands; and I consent to the registration hereof in the Books of Councill and Session, or any other judge's books competent, therin to remain for preservation; and thereto I constitute my procurators, &c. In witness whereof I have subscribed these presents (written by David Maul, Writer to the Signet), at Edinburgh, the twenty-fourth day of November one thousand seven hundred and thirty-six years, before these witnesses, George Fraser, Deputy Auditor of the Excise in Scotland, Master of the Canongate Lodge; and William Montgomerie, Merchant in Leith, Master of the Leith Lodge.

Sic Subscribitur WM. ST. CLAIR.

Geo. Fraser, Canongate Kilwinning, witness.
Wm. Montgomerie, Leith Kilwinning, witness.

Several, at least, and possibly a majority of the representatives present, had been instructed to vote for the Earl of Home, whilst none of the Lodges, with the exception of Canongate Kilwinning—of which St. Clair was a member—up till the period of election, appear to have been aware upon what grounds the latter's claims were to be urged. Nevertheless, the brethren were so fascinated with the apparent magnanimity, disinterestedness, and zeal displayed in his "Resignation," that the Deed was accepted with a unanimity that must have been very gratifying to the Lodge at whose instance it had been drawn, and the abdication of an obsolete office in Operative Masonry was made the ground of St. Clair being chosen to fill the post of first Grand Master in the Scottish Grand Lodge of Speculative Masons.[1]

William St. Clair was initiated in Canongate Kilwinning, May 18, 1736, or nearly eight months *after* the "chusing of a Grand Master" had first been discussed in that Lodge, and was "advanced to the degree of Fellow Craft" in the following month, "paying into the box as usual." John Douglas, a surgeon, and a member of the Lodge of Kirkcaldy, next appears on the scene. This brother was—August 4, 1736—in consideration "of proofs done and to be done," affiliated by Canongate Kilwinning, and on the same occasion appointed "Secretary for the time, with power to appoint his own deputy, in order to his making out a scheme for bringing about a Grand Master for Scotland." Eight days prior to the Grand Election, St. Clair was advanced to "the degree of Master Mason," and two days later he signed the document that was to facilitate the election of a Grand Master, which was written and attested by three leading members of his Mother-Lodge.

In the words of the highest authority on the subject of Scottish Masonry—the circumstances connected with the affiliation of Dr. Douglas, render it probable that he had been introduced for the purpose of perfecting a previously concocted plan, whereby the election of a Grand Master might be made to contribute to the aggrandizement of the Lodge receiving him. His subsequent advancement and frequent re-election to the chair of Substi-

[1] Lyon, *ut supra*, p. 173.

tute Grand Master would indicate the possession of high Masonic qualifications, and to these the Craft may have been indebted for the resuscitation of the St. Clair Charters,[1] and the dramatic effect which their identification with the successful aspirant to the Grand Mastership gave to the institution of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Whatever may have been the immediate motive of the originators of the scheme, the setting up a Grand Lodge ostensibly upon the ruins of an institution that had ceased to be of practical benefit, but which in former times had been closely allied to the Guilds of the Mason Craft, gave to the new organization an air of antiquity as the lineal representative of the ancient courts of Operative Masonry; while the opportune resignation of St. Clair was, if not too closely criticised, calculated to give the whole affair a sort of legal aspect which was wanting at the institution of the Grand Lodge of England.[2]

The other Grand Officers elected on November 30, 1736, were Captain John Young, D.G.M.; Sir William Baillie, S.G.W.; Sir Alexander Hope, J.G.W.; Dr. John Moncrief, G. Treasurer; John Macdougall, G. Secretary; and Robert Alison, G. Clerk.[3]

The first quarterly communication was held January 12, 1737, when the minutes and proceedings of the Four Associated Lodges, and the minutes of the Grand Election were read and unanimously approved of.[4]

The Lodge of Kilwinning[5] had not only been a consenting party to the election of a Grand Master, but issued its proxy in favor of "Sinclair of Rossland, Esquire." This was sent, together with some objections to the proposed "General Regulations," to Mr. George Fraser, the Master of Canongate Kilwinning, who, whilst using the former, delayed presentation of the latter, until the meeting of Grand Lodge last referred to. The Kilwinning Masons chiefly protested against the Grand Lodge being always held at Edinburgh, alleging that the Masters and Wardens of Lodges "in and about" that city might go or send their proxies to other places, as well as the Masters and Wardens of other Lodges might go or send their proxies to Edinburgh. They also represented that the registration fee of half-a-crown, to be paid for each intrant, in order to support the dignity of the Grand Lodge, should be rendered optional in the case of working Masons, who, especially in country places, were generally unable to do more than pay the dues to their respective Lodges. Although the "observations" of the Lodge of Kilwinning, with regard to the inexpediency of establishing a fixed governing body in the metropolis might have seriously hampered the action of the junto by whom the Grand Election was controlled, if the use of the proxy had been clogged by the proviso, that it was only granted contingently upon the representations of the Kilwinning Masons being acceded to—it is scarcely likely, that under the circumstances of the case, it was even seriously regarded. The appeal on behalf of the working Masons was rejected, and the Grand Lodge decreed that those who refused or neglected to pay the entry money should receive no aid from the charity fund.

[1] Chaps. VIII., p. 2; XVI., p. 97. [2] Lyon, *ut supra*, p. 174.

[3] The Deputy, J. W., and Secretary were members of "Kilwinning Scots Arms;" the S.W., of "Canongate Kilwinning;" the Treasurer, of "Leith Kilwinning;" and the Clerk, of "Mary's Chapel."

[4] To avoid a multiplicity of references, it will be convenient to state that, in the general narrative, except where other authorities are cited, I follow the annals of the G. L. of Scotland, as given in the two editions of Laurie's (or Laurie's) History. *Cf.* Chap. VIII., pp. 3, 4.

[5] Further allusions to Lodges, of which sketches are given in Chapter VIII. (*q. v.*), rest on the same sources of authority, supplemented by the additional evidence to which reference will be made as we proceed.

The first Grand Election took place, as we have seen, on St. Andrew's Day (November 30); but though the original "General Regulations" provided that future elections should be held—conformably, it may be supposed, with the practice in the South—on the Day of St. John the Baptist, it was resolved—April 13, 1737—that the Annual Election should always be celebrated on November 30, the birthday of St. Andrew, the tutelar saint of Scotland.

William St. Clair of Roslin was succeeded as Grand Master—November 30, 1737—by George, third and last Earl of Cromarty. At this meeting it was resolved, that the Grand Secretary and Grand Clerk should not be annually elected with the other Grand Officers, but continue to hold their offices during good behaviour;[1] also, that all the Lodges holding of the Grand Lodge should be enrolled according to their seniority, which should be determined from the authentic documents they produced—those producing none to be put at the end of the roll, though the Lodges thus postponed were to have their precedency readjusted, on adducing subsequent proof "of their being elder;"[2] and that the four Quarterly Communications of the Grand Lodge should be held in St. Mary's Chapel, Edinburgh, on the first Wednesday of each of the four Scottish quarterly terms, viz., Candlemas, Whitsunday, Lammas, and Martinmas, when these terms should fall upon a Wednesday, and in other cases on the first Wednesday next following.

The foundation-stone of the New Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh was laid by the Grand Master—August 2, 1738—with Masonic honors.

From this time until the year 1756 a new Grand Master was chosen annually; but as the Deputy (or *Depute*) G.M.—Captain John Young—continued to hold his office uninterruptedly from 1736 to 1752, and the Substitute G.M.—John Douglas[3]—for nearly the same period, little, if any inconvenience, can have resulted from the short terms for which the Grand Master Masons of Scotland were elected. Indeed, it may rather be supposed that from the fact of the virtual government of the Society being left in the hands of a permanent Deputy, and a Substitute Grand Master, the affairs of the Craft were regulated with a due regard both to order and precedent; whilst the brief occupancy of the Masonic throne by more persons of distinction than would have been possible under the later system of election, must have greatly conduced to the general favor with which Masonry was regarded by people of every rank and position in the Scottish kingdom.

Lord Cromarty was succeeded by John, third Earl of Kintore,[4] during whose presidency a Grand Visitation was made—December 27, 1738—to the Lodge of Edinburgh, and a new office, that of Provincial Grand Master, established, by the appointment—February 7, 1739—of Alexander Drummond, Master of "Greenock Kilwinning," to the supervision of the "West Country Lodges." Two months later—April 20—Drummond visited "St. John's Old Kilwinning Lodge," at Inverness, in the minutes of which body he is described as "the Provincial Grand Master for Scotland," and on being "entreated," took the chair, and "lectured the brethren for their instruction."[5] On November 30, 1739, the Commission was renewed, and Drummond styled therein "Provincial Grand Master of the several Lodges in the Western Shires of Scotland," and again in the same terms in 1740, 1741, and 1742. This worthy subsequently went to reside at Alexandretta, in Turkey,

[1] Lyon, p. 216.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 245.
[3] Lawrie, 1804, gives November 30, 1738, as the date of his appointment; but in the later edition of 1859 it is shown as July 14, 1737. Both Young and Douglas held their offices until November 30, 1752.
[4] Chap. XVII., pp. 141, 145.
[5] Ross, p. 17.